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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, March 11, 1932.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Meals for Just Two." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Leaflet available: Cooking Beef According to the Cut."

Front seats at our party this morning are reserved for three housekeepers all with the same problem--cooking for two.

First, there's Mrs. Newly Wed who has only herself and her husband to cook for.

Next, there's Miss Business Girl who cooks and keeps house in a small apartment with another girl.

Third, there's Mrs. Retired, whose children have married now and gone to homes of their own, leaving her to cook for just two as in her first days of housekeeping.

"With two there are so many things I can't serve! Meals seem monotonous because I don't know how to prepare food in small amounts economically," complains the bride.

"There are so many left overs after meals in our apartment. Can't you give me some advice on cooking for two, Aunt Sammy?" asks the business girl housekeeper.

"I'm so used to cooking for a big family that I need some help on recipes to suit just Dad and me," says the housekeeper with the grown-up family.

There, you see, are some of the problems of meals for two. Wise planning and marketing will solve most of them.

Take this question of recipes, for example. Where to find recipes made in quantities to feed just two? Your cookbook probably allows amounts for six. The radio recipes in our green cookbook are planned for five or six. However, if your family numbers just two or three, you can generally cut the ingredients in halves or thirds and still follow the same procedure in making.

"But suppose you have to divide such an ingredient as an egg when you are cutting down the recipe," suggests the bride.

It's not difficult to divide an egg. Just beat up the whole egg until it pours easily, then measure it with a standard measuring spoon and divide it.

But here's a hint about eggs in the recipe. In general to add a bit more egg than the recipe calls for won't do much harm.

Beside recipes of the right size, you need utensils of the right size for small-quantity cooking. For a small family, you'll bake small cakes. For small cakes, suitable for two, use the small loaf pans, the five- or six-inch layer cake pans or the tiny cup-cake pans. Small bowls, sauce pans, and so forth should also be part of your kitchen equipment. Then, there are the individual ramekins or small casseroles for baking and serving your savory main dishes of meats, cheese, or vegetables--and for your baked puddings, too.

Since left-overs are often the cause of sad waste in the kitchen, try to avoid them as much as possible. If you do fix over food from the day before, be sure you serve it in a new and tempting form. Sometimes, you can plan on left-overs that will save time and effort in preparing meals. If you plan your meals several days ahead, for example, it's often wise to cook more of one vegetable than you need at a meal. Then you can serve it in salad, in soup or in some main dish the next day.

When you go to market and purchase perishable food, it's economy to know just how you are going to use every ounce of it. Many foods can appear for several meals without becoming monotonous if they are served in different forms. Take potatoes, forinstance. Left-over boiled or baked potatoes are delicious creamed, scalloped, made into potato salad or even into hash. Bits of left-over vegetables may be chilled and used in a combination vegetable salad.

Now let's talk about meals for two, course by course. If it's dinner, you may want to start with a cocktail or appetizer. No difficulty at all about this course, since so many fruits come in individual portions-- either fresh or canned. There's tomato cocktail, too. You can make up a jar of seasoned tomato juice and keep it on hand in your refrigerator to use little by little. Many people are using bright, tart vegetable appetizers these days as a change from salads. I had one the other day made of fresh tomato cut up, diced green pepper, some finely shaved cabbage and a few slices of a stuffed olive, with just enough French or cooked dressing to flavor and moisten the mixture.

When it comes to choosing meats for two, the problem isn't very difficult either. Of course, large roasts, whole hams, big turkeys and such are out of the picture. But there are plenty of other cuts that will do for small quantity cooking. I don't need to mention such old stand-bys as ground beef and stewing meat because most families of two know about them. But pot roast, deserves mentioning. How many brides keep pot roast on their list for frequent use? Serve it hot to begin with, then sliced cold, and finally made into croquettes which also utilize left-over mashed potatoes.

A calf heart is another wise and economical choice. Very nice stuffed.

For company when you want a small roast, there's the breast of the shoulder of lamb. These cuts are less expensive than the leg and when stuffed with savory dressing are most delicious. The next day you can serve them sliced cold and the scraps left the day after that can be used creamed, chopped and served on toast with hot gravy, or in curries.

Pork for the small family? My, yes, both fresh and cured. The shoulders belong in the low-cost group of meats so they are adaptable to meals for two as lamb shoulder. Pork chop suey is excellent and a novel way of utilizing left-over pork. Did you ever try roast stuffed spareribs? There's another economical and good meat dish for two. As for cured pork, the shoulder is also a good buy. It can be cooked, diced and creamed, cooked with noodles, combined with potatoes and so forth. Smoked shoulder butts are small and boneless. When baked they are a choice piece.

What about fish? Well, either buy small ones like butterfish, smelts and small mackerel, or choose the fillets or slices of such large fish as cod, haddock and halibut. Shellfish--oysters, clams, shrimp, and crab you can serve creamed, scalloped or in chowders.

Vegetables!

"Gracious," says the bride at the grocery store. "Shall I buy one, two or three pounds of peas? And how much spinach and how much broccoli will satisfy us?"

Experience will soon teach you such items as that for two people you'll need about a pound of asparagus, but only about a half a pound of cabbage, or string beans and so forth. Canned vegetables are convenient for serving two for fortunately these come in small size cans.

Desserts for two are not difficult if you remember not to make up large batches of cookies, or cakes that will get dry before you can use them, or puddings that are too large. Fruits, fresh and cooked, quivering gelatin desserts, tender cornstarch puddings, creamy tapiocas and velvety ice creams--all these go on the list for just two.

Menu time is here again. And we're featuring an inexpensive Sunday dinner that will be suitable for a family of two - or of four, five, six or more.

Swiss steak made with tomatoes is the main dish. The recipe is in your beef leaflet. For two people, buy only a small amount of round steak, or else plan on using the left-over meat again next day. Swiss steak; Buttered lima beans; Boiled carrots, cut lengthwise and seasoned with salt, pepper and butter; Crisp lettuce salad; and for dessert, Apricot tapioca.

The beef leaflet, called "Cooking Beef According to the Cut", as well as the other meat leaflets, will help the business of cooking for two. The recipe for the Sunday Swiss steak is there along with other recipes for low-cost meat dishes. The recipe for apricot tapioca is in the green cookbook.

We have just time to go over the menu once again. Swiss steak; Buttered lima beans; Boiled carrots; Lettuce salad; Apricot tapioca.

Monday -- "Some Mending Hints."